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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
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SUBJECT: "Tomorrow's Market" Information from marketing economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Like to take a peak in the corner grocery of 1956?

Well...here's how it's pictured by Dr. F.L. Thomsen, head of the division of marketing and transportation research of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

First--there'll be a quality and freshness of vegetables such as we dream of today. Luscious, big tomatoes -picked vine-ripe only yesterday in fields on the Mexican border....lettuce, firm and crisp and garden-fresh from California....sweet corn and English peas...still touched with the dew of Southern fields where they were harvested only a few hours ago.

These will be brought to tomorrow's market by airplane.

The vegetables will be packed in cardboard boxes with plio-film windows. All waste will be cut away. The packaging will be done at the farm. And a label will tell the housewife the location of the farm the date the vegetables were harvested.

The housewife of '56 will buy frozen meat. Even steaks...roasts and pork chops. Advantage of meat in frozen form is that it can be more easily standardized. The housewife can be sure from day to day what she's getting. Frozen meat is more easily packaged too. And it can be dispensed from a self-service locker.

Self-service will be practically complete in tomorrow's market- says Dr. Thomsen. It makes for efficiency and cuts the costs.

But to go on with the foods. The frozen foods department of tomorrow's market will be greatly expanded. Here the housewife will buy the fruits and vegetables and meats we see on the market today. She will also buy many new ones that have been developed.

Many of the frozen foods will be pre-cooked...ready to serve with only a little heating. In fact...Dr. Thomsen predicts that the corner grocery may feature whole pre-cooked meals--complete with beverage and dessert.

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It's highly possible the housewife will be able to go to the market... buy her choice of "blue plate" lunches or dinners--pre-cooked and quick-frozen... and complete the cooking in an electronic cooker while she takes in a television broadcast.

Clearing the table and washing the dishes after such a meal may consist merely of bundling up all the left-overs and paper utensils in the paper tablecloth...and dumping it in the garbage can.

If these ideas sound a bit far-fetched to you...just think what a transition has taken place in marketing and transportation in the past fifty or sixty years. Certainly, great-grandmother--who did her shopping in the village general store back in the seventies--would find today's market a marvel hard to believe. And the changes--envisioned by Dr. Thomsen--in tomorrow's market are no more revolutionary.

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